COMICRAFT PRESENTS

THEO LAROUX MEETS

THE ELEPHANTMEN™

COMIXOLOGY ORIGINALS

2261 BOOK THREE

RICHARD STARKINGS
AXEL MEDELLIN
With
TYLER SMITH
and
BOO COOK

THEO LAROUX MEETS

THE ELEPHANTMEN™

RICHARD STARKINGS

AXEL MEDELLIN

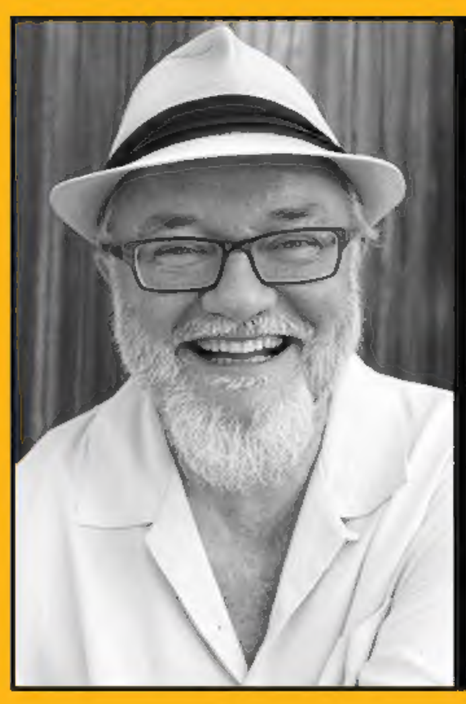
2261

THEO LAROUX

TYLER SMITH

BOO COOK

FOR
LOUIS
THEROUX!
WEIRD
WEEKEND
READING



RICHARD STARKINGS is not only the creator/writer of ELEPHANTMEN but also, co-creator, with Abigail Jill Harding, of ASK FOR MERCY! and co-creator, with Tyler Shainline and Shaky Kane, of THE BEEF. In the course of a distinguished career in comic books, Richard edited a line of original titles for Marvel UK in the 80s, founded the COMICRAFT design and lettering studio in the 90s and established the foremost and most extensive source for comic book lettering fonts at comicbookfonts.com. He has worked as a lettering artist on just about every mainstream comic book you might care to mention -- including BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE -- and has written comic strips for THE REAL GHOSTBUSTERS, ZOIDS, TRANSFORMERS and DOCTOR WHO. With Comicraft's Secret Weapon, John Roshell, Richard created the indispensable guide, COMIC BOOK LETTERING THE COMICRAFT WAY as well as the Artist Retrospectives TIM SALE: BLACK AND WHITE and J SCOTT CAMPBELL: TIME CAPSULE. Richard loves Betty's Tearooms, Cadbury's Flake and Lori Perkins, but not necessarily in that order.

AXEL MEDELLIN has been creating his fantastic art for the ELEPHANTMEN series since 2010. Nevertheless, he has somehow managed to fit in drawing and coloring other comics for HEAVY METAL, Zenescope, Boom! Studios and Image Comics' FIFTY GIRLS FIFTY with Frank Cho. This collection marks Axel's TENTH year as regular artist on ELEPHANTMEN. Here's to ANOTHER ten!

He is probably meeting a deadline right now.

BOO COOK studied illustration at Art college in Cambridge where he felt he was learning a lot as his artistic imagination was beaten out of him – which caused him to retreat to play drums for five years while he spray-painted the unspeakable parts of ceramic beagles at a factory in Scotland. In the year 2000AD he approached the British comics weekly 2000AD with his portfolio and was soon drawing notable characters such as JUDGE DREDD, JUDGE ANDERSON, ABC WARRIORS, HARRY KIPLING, ASYLUM and, most recently, BLUNT for the JUDGE DREDD Megazine. Boo has also illustrated strips for Titan's Doctor Who line and covers for various Marvel books including WOLVERINE. Boo is a talented musician and frequently performs with his bands, FORKTAIL and MOTHERBOX. The cover of this volume is Boo's 60th ELEPHANTMEN cover.

RICHARD STARKINGS
President & First Tiger

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APPROVED BY THE COMICRAFT AUTHORITY

ELEPHANTMEN: 2261 BOOK 3: THEO LAROUX MEETS THE ELEPHANTMEN First Printing, DECEMBER 2020. PUBLISHED BY COMICRAFT INC. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 2002 AVALON AVENUE, CHATTANOOGA TN 37415. COPYRIGHT © 2020 RICHARD STARKINGS. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. "ELEPHANTMEN," ITS LOGOS, AND THE LIKENESSES OF ALL CHARACTERS HEREIN ARE TRADEMARKS OF RICHARD STARKINGS, UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. "COMICRAFT" AND THE COMICRAFT LOGO ARE TRADEMARKS OF COMICRAFT, INC. NO PART OF THIS PUBLICATION MAY BE REPRODUCED OR TRANSMITTED, IN ANY FORM OR BY ANY MEANS (EXCEPT FOR SHORT EXCERPTS FOR JOURNALISTIC OR REVIEW PURPOSES), WITHOUT THE EXPRESS WRITTEN PERMISSION OF RICHARD STARKINGS, OR COMICRAFT, INC. ALL NAMES, CHARACTERS, EVENTS, AND LOCALES IN THIS PUBLICATION ARE ENTIRELY FICTIONAL. ANY RESEMBLANCE TO ACTUAL PERSONS (LIVING OR DEAD), EVENTS, OR PLACES, WITHOUT SATIRIC INTENT, IS COINCIDENTAL.

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1

BEING IN THE PRESENCE OF AN ELEPHANTMAN IS INTIMIDATING TO SAY THE LEAST.

LOS ANGELES
2261

THERE'S NOWHERE TO RUN TO, FRANK.

I WAS IN LOS ANGELES TO MEET THE ELEPHANTMEN.

PRESS

I'D NEVER MET ONE IN PERSON BEFORE AND REALLY DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT...

≠AHUH≠

PRESS

I CERTAINLY DIDN'T EXPECT THEM TO BE FAST ON THEIR FEET.

≠AHUH≠

PRESS

≠AHUH≠ ≠AHUH≠

PRESS

≠UHHH≠

I THINK I'M GOING TO BE SICK...

GIVE ME A MINUTE!

PRESS

I WAS ON A RIDEALONG WITH A CHARACTER BY THE NAME OF LIEUTENANT **TRENCH**, A HARD AS NAILS, UH, ZEBRA, WITH AN ATTITUDE AND JUST **ONE** EYE.

PRESS

PRESS

PRESS

TRANQ!

SHWIFF

AKK!

DAMMIT

HH

UHHHH

YEH

I'M COMING... HOLD ON!

STEADY, STEADY...

OH YEAH...

MMM HMMM...

PRESS

WATCH OUT FOR HIS *JAWS* -- THEY'RE JUST *REFLEX ACTIONS*, BUT HE COULD *BITE* YOUR HEAD OFF!

GIMME SOME MORE, BABY...

I'M FINE RIGHT HERE...

IS HE OKAY? I MEAN, IS IT SAFE?

YEAH, HE'S TRANQED JUST ENOUGH THAT HE WON'T FALL OVER, BUT NOT ENOUGH TO TAKE HIM OUT.

IF HE FELL, HE COULD KNOCK MOST OF HIS TEETH OUT.

SWEET!

WHAT IS HE MUTTERING ABOUT?

THERE'S ALSO A HEFTY DOSE OF DOPAMINE IN THERE SO HE'S GETTING SOME *FEEL GOOD* VIBES.

I WILL NEED YOU TO HOLD HIS HAND, THOUGH.

HOLD HIS HAND?

YEAH BABY...

THAT'S A BIT *WEIRD*, ISN'T IT?

I NEED TO **CUFF** HIM, LAROUX!

NOW!

OH, I THOUGHT YOU MEANT LIKE A BEDSIDE MANNER KIND OF THING.

OUFF! HIS HANDS ARE ***HEAVY!***

AND HE REALLY DOES HAVE ***A LOT*** OF ***TEETH***, DOESN'T HE?

THAT'S WHAT SCARES YOU? WHAT ABOUT THE FACT THAT HE'S A *REPTILE* WITH *HUMAN* GENES?

WE WERE ACCOMPANIED BY TWO HEAVILY-ARMED L.A.P.D OFFICERS...

OKAY, LIEUTENANT, WE CAN TAKE IT FROM HERE.

BUT I NOTICED THAT THEY NEVER SEEMED VERY KEEN ON ACTUALLY KEEPING UP WITH TRENCH.

OH, *YOU'LL* TAKE IT FROM HERE, WILL YOU?

WHERE THE HELL *WERE* THE TWO OF YOU?

THIS CIVILIAN COULD HAVE LOST A LIMB OR DIED!

WAIT. WHAT?

HUMAN APPETITES, *CROCODILE* INSTINCTS...

JUST -- KEEP YOUR *HEAD* AWAY FROM HIS JAWS LIKE I SAID, LAROUX.

TASTE-EEE!

LATER, WHEN I ASKED THE OFFICERS WHAT THEY THOUGHT OF THE ELEPHANTMEN IN GENERAL, ONE OF THEM -- WHO PREFERRED NOT TO TALK ON CAMERA -- TOLD ME THAT HE DIDN'T LIKE THEM VERY MUCH.

HE ADDED, SHRUGGING, THAT, OTHERWISE THEY WERE ALMOST EXACTLY LIKE PEOPLE.

THEO LAROUX MEETS THE ELEPHANTMEN

PART ONE ALMOST EXACTLY LIKE PEOPLE

EARLIER

WHY IS AN ENGLISHMAN LIKE YOU VISITING THE L.A.P.D?

I'M MAKING A *DOCUMENTARY* ABOUT THE ELEPHANTMEN.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN "*AN ENGLISHMAN LIKE ME*"?!

OH, I DUNNO, YOU DON'T SEEM LIKE A *TROUBLE-MAKER.*

DUDE, BE CAREFUL ABOUT CALLING THEM *ELEPHANTMEN*... I USED TO *DATE* ONE..

REALLY?!

HA HA. YOU'RE SHOCKED?

I'M... *SURPRISED*, I MEAN... YOU HAVE TO ADMIT, IT'S NOT, Y'KNOW, *THE NORM.*

I GUESS. BUT NOT IF YOU LIKE *MUSCLES.*

"I" LIKE MUSCLES. SOME OF THOSE ELEPHANTMEN ARE *HOT.*

IT HAD NEVER OCCURRED TO ME THAT ANYONE MIGHT REGARD AN ELEPHANTMAN AS "HOT."

WHEN I LEARNED THAT MIKI'S FORMER BOYFRIEND WAS A HIPPOPOTAMUS/HUMAN HYBRID, I WAS EVEN MORE SURPRISED.

A HOT HIPPOPOTAMUS.

MIKI WAS VERY EASY ON THE EYE AND IT OCCURRED TO ME THAT SHE COULD HAVE ANYONE IN HER LIFE BUT FOR SOME REASON WAS MORE INTRIGUED BY TRANSGENICS.

I WONDERED IF MIKI WAS TYPICAL OF YOUNG WOMEN IN LOS ANGELES.

DO YOU ALSO DATE *MEN?* I MEAN, YOU KNOW, *HUMAN* MEN. PEOPLE. *GUYS.*

MISTER LAROUX! ARE YOU ASKING ME OUT?

NO, NO, NO...

BUT MAYBE LATER I COULD TALK TO YOU AND YOUR FELLA?

SURE, I'LL SET THAT UP...

WE COULD HAVE A *THREESOME!*

I WASN'T QUITE SURE IF MIKI WAS ALTOGETHER SERIOUS OR NOT, BUT SHE OFFERED TO MAKE INTRODUCTIONS TO THE LIEUTENANT WHO HAD AGREED TO MEET WITH ME.

THIS IS A *LOT* OF ROBOTS. IT'S JUST LIKE THE *CONSUMER AFFAIRS* DEPARTMENT AT THE BBC!

YOU SEEM TO BE ABLE TO COME AND GO AS YOU PLEASE HERE... WHAT'S *THAT* ABOUT?

WELL, TRENCH AND I HAVE SOME HISTORY. THERE WAS THAT WHOLE ATTACK ON L.A.

REMEMBER? THE HYENAS?

I DIDN'T REMEMBER ANY HYENAS BUT SMILED AND NODDED AS IF I DID.

BE ON YOUR GUARD. I'VE KNOWN SOME HARD BOILED EGGS IN MY TIME, BUT TRENCH IS *TWENTY MINUTES.*

TWENTY MINUTES?

I LIKED MIKI TOO, I HOPED SHE'D GET BACK IN TOUCH, I WANTED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT HER FRIENDSHIPS WITH TRANSGENICS.

ALL RIGHT, THEN, I'LL LEAVE YOU BOYS ALONE.

PLAY NICE, TRENCH, I *LIKE* THIS GUY.

HE'S GOT FIVE MINUTES.

I'LL SEE YOU LATER, AS LONG AS YOU BRING THAT SEXY *ENGLISH ACCENT* WITH YOU!

SHE WASN'T THE FIRST AMERICAN GIRL TO COMMENT ON MY ACCENT, AND SHE WOULDN'T BE THE LAST...

HI, I'M THEO, PLEASED TO MEET YOU.

WHY DON'T YOU GO AHEAD AND ASK YOUR QUESTIONS.

WELL, I WAS WONDERING ABOUT *THE GREAT WAR.*

ABOUT *YOUR* ROLE IN THAT CONFLICT.

UNFORTUNATELY, MY CHARMS WERE MUCH LESS EFFECTIVE WITH ELEPHANTMEN.

I MEAN, A LOT OF PEOPLE DIED IN THAT WAR...

MOST HUMANS DIED AS A RESULT OF THE FCN VIRUS.

WHAT'S YOUR POINT.

BUT THE TRANSGENIC ARMY WAS THERE TO WIPE OUT ANY SURVIVORS...

SO, PRESUMABLY, YOU KILLED YOUR FAIR SHARE, IS THAT RIGHT?

IS THERE A VET ON EITHER SIDE WHO DIDN'T?

BUT YOU WERE SCIENTIFICALLY DESIGNED AND *ENGINEERED* TO BE A SOLDIER.

I GUESS WHAT I'M ASKING IS, WELL, WHAT EXACTLY IS *DIFFERENT* ABOUT YOU NOW?

DID YOU FIND GOD?

GOD? *IN LOS ANGELES?*

ISN'T EVERYONE HERE A BUDDHIST?

WE WERE REHABILITATED. WE WERE TAUGHT RIGHT FROM WRONG...

YES, AND I DON'T MEAN TO BE DISRESPECTFUL, BUT YOU'RE NOT *HUMAN*, ARE YOU?

I MEAN, NOT *PHYSICALLY* HUMAN?

AH. YOU'RE ASKING IF I HAVE A *SOUL*.

IN A WAR, WHEN SOMEONE IS *SHOOTING* AT YOU, YOU CAN SHOOT BACK AT THEM UNTIL SOMEONE *STOPS* SHOOTING.

NOWADAYS, WHEN SOMEONE IS *SHOOTING* AT ME, I HAVE TO DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT SHOOTING BACK IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO...

IS THAT THE ANSWER YOU'RE LOOKING FOR?

I REALLY DON'T MEAN ANY DISRESPECT. I GUESS I WAS JUST WONDERING IF YOU ACTUALLY *MISS* BEING IN A WAR.

BECAUSE THAT'S THE PURPOSE YOU WERE BUILT FOR.

UM.

SO WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR *EYE?*

MY *EYE?*

SHRAPNEL. NEXT QUESTION.

AT THIS POINT I REALIZED THAT I WAS PUSHING MY LUCK AND OPTED FOR A DIFFERENT APPROACH.

BEING IN THE PRESENCE OF AN ELEPHANTMAN IS INTIMIDATING TO SAY THE LEAST.

*I DECIDED TO COMMENT ON THE ONE THING I REALLY **HADN'T** EXPECTED.*

YOU ACTUALLY ***SMELL*** VERY NICE.

SMELL?

HA NO-ONE HAS EVER SAID THAT BEFORE.

WELL, YOU'RE A BIG, ***TOUGH*** GUY... I WAS IMAGINING MORE OF, Y'KNOW, A *SWEATY LOCKER ROOM* SMELL IN HERE.

I MEAN, DON'T ***YOU*** HAVE A GIRLFRIEND? SOMEONE TO TELL YOU THAT YOU SMELL NICE?

YOU BRITS ARE ODDBALLS.

YEAH, WE GET THAT A LOT. WHAT ABOUT A *RIDEALONG?* DO YOU STILL ***DO*** THOSE?

*I KNEW TRENCH WAS QUITE THE OLD **WARHORSE**, AND I GENUINELY WANTED TO UNDERSTAND WHY THE L.A.P.D KEPT HIM ON THE FORCE...*

I ALSO KNEW THAT TRENCH HAD BEEN DECORATED FOR HIS ROLE IN DEFEATING **PROMETHEAN** IN THE BATTLE FOR LOS ANGELES IN 2260...*

*See ELEPHANTMEN #65-69

AND HE HAD ONLY RECENTLY RETURNED TO ACTIVE DUTY AFTER SUFFERING MAJOR INJURIES FOLLOWING HIS PURSUIT AND CAPTURE OF DRUG DEALER, **LINDA LUNDY.***

*See ELEPHANTMEN #76

BUT THERE WERE OTHER STORIES TOO...

OF INTIMIDATING SUSPECTS AND KILLING WITNESSES...*

*See ELEPHANTMEN #8

ONE OF THE COPS I TALKED TO CLAIMS HE STOPPED TRENCH FROM KILLING AN UNCONSCIOUS SUSPECT IN A CRACK HOUSE...*

*See ELEPHANTMEN #56

BUT I WAS WILLING TO GIVE HIM THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT, AND NOT **JUST** BECAUSE HE SMELLED NICE.

YOU'RE A STRAIGHT SHOOTER, AREN'T YOU? HERE IN AMERICA, I THINK THEY WOULD CALL YOU A MAN'S MAN.

AN ELEPHANTMAN'S ELEPHANTMAN?

I SPENT A DAY ON THE STREETS WITH TRENCH AND WAS SURPRISED BY HIM AT EVERY TURN.

HE SEEMED **COMMITTED** TO BRINGING JUSTICE TO THE CITY, MORESO MAYBE THAN HIS **HUMAN** COUNTERPARTS.

I WONDERED IF TRENCH WAS **CONSCIOUSLY** TRYING TO COUNTERBALANCE THE EVIL PERPETRATED BY THE ELEPHANTMEN IN EUROPE OR IF PERHAPS HE HAD A SIMPLE **MORAL COMPASS** MUCH LIKE MY OWN.

I WAS REMINDED OF A QUOTE FROM DESIDERIUS ERASMUS'S ADAGIA: IN REGIONE CAECORUM REX EST LUSCUS... "IN THE COUNTRY OF THE BLIND, THE ONE-EYED MAN IS KING."

A KING CAPABLE OF BOTH GREAT SORROW AND GREAT ANGER.

STOP RIGHT THERE...

PR

WE AIN'T DONE NOTHIN', MUNT...

YOU WANNA SHOW ME WHAT YOU GOT THERE...

JUST A *NECKLACE*, IT'S MY SISTER'S!

YOU THINK I DON'T *KNOW* WHAT THAT IS?

IVORY! AND YOU KNOW WHERE THIS IS TAKEN FROM, RIGHT?

ELEPHANTMEN!

WHERE DID YOU GET THIS?

SAY HIS NAME! SAY IT!

I COULD TELL THAT FINDING THE IVORY AROUND THE GANGER'S NECK HAD BEEN A TRIGGER FOR TRENCH. I WAS CONCERNED THAT THINGS MIGHT GET A LITTLE BIT OUT OF CONTROL.

DESERT BREEZES

BY SAHARA

UM... LIEUTENANT...?

SAY HIS NAME!

LIEUTENANT, I DON'T THINK HE'S GOING TO ANSWER THAT, IS HE?

PRESS

IT DOESN'T MATTER. I KNOW.

SERENGHETI.

THEY ARE MORE AFRAID OF *HIM* THAN THEY ARE OF *THE LAW.*

DESERT BREEZES

BY SAHARA

SERENGHETI, FATHER OF **SAHARA**, BRIDE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL ELEPHANTMEN OF THEM ALL, OBADIAH HORN.

SERENGHETI? I TAKE IT YOU DON'T *LIKE* HIM?

YOU WANT A *STORY...*

HORN, SAHARA, SERENGHETI...

PULL ON THAT THREAD.

I HAD EVERY INTENTION OF TALKING TO BOTH **HORN** AND **SAHARA** BUT THEY WERE NOTORIOUSLY ELUSIVE.

AND I KNEW THAT THE LAST JOURNALISTS WHO ATTEMPTED TO INTERVIEW THEM AT THEIR HOME IN **IVORY TOWERS** HAD MET THEIR DEATHS UNDER VERY SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES...*

I GATHER FROM YOUR TONE THAT YOU HAVE NO TIME FOR EITHER OBADIAH HORN *OR* THIS SERENGHETI CHARACTER.

I'M AN OFFICER OF THE LAW.

IT'S NOT MY PLACE TO HAVE AN *OPINION*, IF I HAVE NO *EVIDENCE* TO SUPPORT IT.

BUT OBADIAH HORN SEEMS TO THINK HE IS SOMEHOW *ABOVE* THE LAW.

THIS WASN'T THE FIRST SUGGESTION I'D HEARD THAT OBADIAH HORN ENJOYED SOME KIND OF **SPECIAL STATUS** IN LOS ANGELES. THAT MAYBE HE HAD FRIENDS IN **HIGH PLACES.**

PRESS

*See ELEPHANTMEN #10

AND SOME HAD SAID THAT SERENGHETI **KIDNAPPED** SAHARA'S CHILD AT HER WEDDING.*

THE CHILD OF HER UNION WITH OBADIAH HORN.

*It happened in ELEPHANTMEN #62

PERHAPS EVEN MORE DISTURBING WERE THE STORIES THAT HORN HAD SHOT SPIRITUAL LEADER **GABBATHA** THAT SAME DAY.*

AND THAT NO CHARGES WERE BEING BROUGHT AGAINST HIM AFTER THE FACT.

*Also #62

I SUSPECTED THAT ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS I HAD IN RELATIONSHIP TO HORN'S ACTIVITIES WOULD BE STONEWALLED BY TRENCH.

I WAS GOING TO TRY MY LUCK ASKING THEM ANYWAY, BUT AS I WAS TRYING TO PUT MY THOUGHTS INTO SOME KIND OF ORDER...

FRANK! I TOLD YOU BEFORE WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF I SAW YOU OUT HERE AGAIN!

WHAT IS HE DOING?

PIMPING OUT ELEPHANTMEN TO BI-SPECIES-CURIOUS GIRLS.

HIS RESPONSE SUGGESTED A WHOLE NEW LIST OF QUESTIONS BUT I DECIDED TO TABLE THEM FOR THE MOMENT...

PRESS

TRENCH WAS OFF AGAIN...

AND HE WAS SURPRISINGLY FAST ON HIS FEET!

2

I MEAN, IT'S KIND OF LIKE A CHILD'S IMAGINING OF SUPER SOLDIERS, ISN'T IT?

CROCS VERSUS HYENAS!

HIPPOS VERSUS RHINOS!

LOS ANGELES 2261

Woosh

Hoooooo!

AHHHH!

MIKI, WAS THAT, UH, ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY?

YOU DIDN'T ENJOY IT?

WELCOME TO MY WORLD...

SHUT UP, HIP, YOU LOVE IT!

ANYWAY, THEO, DIDN'T YOU SAY YOU HAD SOME *QUESTIONS* FOR ME?

*I WAS IN LOS ANGELES TO MEET **THE ELEPHANTMEN.***

*BUT I WANTED TO TALK TO MIKI AFTER I FOUND OUT SHE HAD BEEN IN A RELATIONSHIP WITH A TRANSGENIC BY THE NAME OF **HIP FLASK**. THAT'S HIM IN THE BACK SEAT.*

WELL, YEAH... I SUPPOSE I DO...

FOR INSTANCE, WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT *HARVEST?*

DNA

THEO LAROUX MEETS THE ELEPHANTMEN

PART TWO

Y'KNOW, I WAS HOPING TO INTERVIEW *BOTH* OF YOU, *TOGETHER*...

IF YOU'RE GOING TO ASK ME ABOUT *HARVEST*, IT'S FOR *YOUR* EARS ONLY.

YOU DO *REALIZE* THIS IS A *DOCUMENTARY*, RIGHT...?

NO ONE WATCHES DOCUMENTARIES.

AND ANYWAY, WHEN YOU KNOW MY STORY, YOU'LL THINK TWICE BEFORE TRANSMITTING IT.

OKAY, THEN, IS THERE SOMEWHERE WE CAN SIT AND CHAT...?

WHAT IS *THIS* PLACE?

IT'S A ***NEW*** BUILDING, RECENTLY COMPLETED... IT'S ***EMPTY*** RIGHT NOW.

ARE YOU ***SURE*** IT'S ALL RIGHT? I MEAN, IT FEELS LIKE WE MIGHT BE *TRESPASSING*.

I COME HERE SOMETIMES, JUST TO THINK. NO-ONE EVER DISTURBS ME.

SO WHAT WAS IT YOU WANTED TO TELL ME? ABOUT HARVEST?

THERE ARE *FORCES* AT WORK IN THIS CITY, THEO...

IT'S NOT JUST HARVEST, IT'S ***PROMETHEAN***, ***MAPPO***...

WAIT, I *DO* WANT TO HEAR ALL ABOUT HARVEST AND ALL THAT, BUT BEFORE WE GO DOWN THAT PATH, THERE'S SOMETHING I'VE BEEN MEANING TO ASK...

OKAY, GO AHEAD...

WHEN DID YOU REALIZE YOU WERE ATTRACTED TO ELEPHANTMEN?

I DUNNO. WHEN DID YOU REALIZE YOU WERE *ENGLISH?*

WELL, UM, I *AM* ENGLISH.

THAT'S WHAT I MEAN. IF YOU'RE OF A CERTAIN AGE IN LOS ANGELES, YOU DON'T REMEMBER A TIME WHEN THERE WERE NO ELEPHANTMEN.

IF YOU GREW UP WITH THEM AROUND, YOU DON'T THINK ABOUT THEM BEING THERE, THEY'RE JUST THERE.

AND THEY'RE INTRIGUING, DON'T YOU THINK? YOU'RE MAKING A DOCUMENTARY ABOUT THEM, YOU ALREADY KNOW THAT.

YEAH, BUT IT'S A BIT *WEIRD*, ISN'T IT?

IS IT? AREN'T WE ALL A BIT WEIRD, THEO?

PEOPLE THINK OF TRANSGENICS AS SOME KIND OF MONSTERS, BUT THEY FORGET, WRAPPED UP IN THAT *ANIMAL* DNA, IS *HUMAN* DNA.

HIP IS *GENTLE* AND *KIND*... THOUGHTFUL...

HE HAS A *GOOD HEART*...

YEAH, A GOOD HEART. I *LIKE* THAT... A *STRONG* HEART.

DO YOU EVER THINK OF THE FACT THAT HE USED TO BE, WELL, *A KILLING MACHINE?*

HE WAS A *SOLDIER*. ALL'S FAIR IN LOVE AND WAR, RIGHT?

HE DOESN'T TALK ABOUT THAT. NOT TO *ME*, NOT REALLY.

YOU SHOULD ASK HIM.

SURE.

I WILL.

UM, I HAVE ANOTHER, MORE PRESSING, QUESTION, ACTUALLY...

ARE THERE ANY TOILETS UP HERE?

BOOM

THIS IS PRIVATE PROPERTY!

NO PHOTOGRAPHY!

DAMMIT. THAT WAS MY CAMERA.

HEY, HEY, HEY...

WE WERE JUST LOOKING FOR THE RESTROOMS--

CITY ORDNANCE 256-C!

THIS IS PRIVATE PROPERTY!

NO PHOTOGRAPHY!

WELL, A WARNING WOULD HAVE BEEN NICE...

YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED

BEANS AND CHEESE! WHAT ARE YOU PROTECTING UP HERE?

AH

NO MORE QUESTIONS

JUST ONE MORE IF I MAY...

CAN I STILL USE THE LOO? SERIOUSLY.

NO? OKAY, I CAN HOLD IT...

I WASN'T SURE WHAT HAD JUST HAPPENED, BUT I KNEW IT WAS TIME FOR US TO LEAVE.

LUCKILY, MIKI HAD A PRIOR APPOINTMENT AT A RESTAURANT WITH EXCELLENT BATHROOMS. WE QUICKLY MADE OUR WAY THERE.

LOOKS LIKE LUNCH WOULD BE A LITTLE BIT *PRICEY* HERE...

I MIGHT HAVE TO STICK TO JUST A *COFFEE*.

DON'T FRET, I'M PRETTY SURE MY, UH, *BENEFACTOR* WILL PICK UP THE CHECK.

ARE YOU SURE? I DON'T WANT TO INTRUDE OR PUT ANYONE OUT OF POCKET.

WELL, WE'RE TALKING ABOUT SOME *DEEP* POCKETS.

THEO, THIS IS *JOE*. HE RUNS THIS PLACE.

HELLO! I'M *THEO*.

PLEASED TO MEET YOU.

OOH. THAT'S A *BIG HAND*...

YOUR *FUR* IS VERY *SOFT*, ISN'T IT?

I GUESS SO, ITS NOT REALLY SOMETHING I'VE THOUGHT ABOUT...

IS THAT A TURN ON FOR GIRLS? YOU KNOW, HUMAN GIRLS...

THEO!

WHAT? IT'S A PERFECTLY REASONABLE QUESTION...

ON THE WAY BACK FROM THE LITTLE BOYS ROOM, I NOTICED THAT MIKI WAS CHATTING TO SOMEONE I DIDN'T RECOGNIZE...

I WONDERED IF THIS MIGHT BE A LOVER OR EX-BOYFRIEND...

HELLO.

NOT INTERRUPTING ANYTHING AM I?

WHOEVER IT WAS, HE CLEARLY DID NOT WANT TO BE CAUGHT ON CAMERA...

WAS THAT THIS MYSTERIOUS *BENEFACTOR* OF YOURS, MIKI?

JUST A FRIEND.

DIDN'T YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT *HARVEST?*

BY THE WAY, I HEAR THE ***SALMON*** IS VERY GOOD HERE.

THAT SOUNDS NICE. I AM A LITTLE PECKISH.

THERE WAS DEFINITELY SOMETHING **FISHY** HERE.

BUT IF MIKI WAS KEEPING ANY SECRETS FROM ME, I COULD TELL IT WASN'T THE RIGHT TIME TO PRY.

CAN I HELP YOU, SIR...?

YES, YES YOU CAN...

I WAS ACTUALLY LOOKING FOR THE BATHROOM...?

IN THE PARKING LOT?

WITH A GUN?

DROP IT.

+++THIS ONE + + SUGGESTS +YOU LIE DOWN AND RE-THINK + YOUR DAY +

FZZZZ

REMIND ME NEVER TO ASK YOU FOR A ***NECK RUB***, DILLON.

+++ MISTER FARRELL ++ THIS ONE IS ***SYNTHETIC*** + THIS ONE IS PROGRAMMED IN SHIATSU, SWEDISH DEEP TISSUE ++

YEAH, YEAH, YEAH, Y'KNOW, SOMETIMES I KINDA MISS THAT RETRO ***ROBOT*** FRAME YOU WERE MODELLING WHEN WE FIRST MET YOU.*

AT LEAST BACK THEN YOU ***LOOKED*** LIKE YOU DIDN'T HAVE A SENSE OF HUMOR.

*See ELEPHANTMEN 2261: THE DEATH OF SHORTY

+++ THIS ONE HAS ACCESS TO OVER ++ SIX MILLION JOKES AND WITTICISMS + WOULD YOU + LIKE TO HEAR AN EXAMPLE? +++

NO.

OKAY, I GOT THE ***FORCEFIELD*** REMOTE...

LET'S FIND WHAT WE CAME HERE FOR.

+++ THIS ONE ALSO KNOWS + + ONE HUNDRED AND ONE ELEPHANTMEN JOKES + IF YOU PREFER +

NO.

MAYBE REMIND ME LATER.

EVERYONE CALLS THEM *ELEPHANTMEN*, OR *HYBRIDS*...

BUT THEY'RE JUST ANOTHER FORM OF *DESIGNER BABY*...

"...EXCEPT, INSTEAD OF *REPAIRING* DAMAGED HUMAN DNA WITH HEALTHY HUMAN DNA, *MAPPO* REPLACED IT WITH *ANIMAL* DNA, RIGHT?

"AND, IN THE PLACE OF WILLING, *HOPEFUL* EXPECTANT MOTHERS...

"WELL, YOU HAVE TO IMAGINE THAT THE WOMEN WHO CARRIED THE ELEPHANTMEN TO TERM WERE ANYTHING BUT *WILLING*.

"I CAN'T EVEN IMAGINE THE BIRTHING PROCESS...*

"I MEAN, HOW *BIG* WERE THOSE BABIES ANYWAY?

"THIS IS WHERE *GENE THERAPY* GOT US.

"*HYBRID* CHILDREN, RESISTANT TO DISEASE. IMPERVIOUS TO *PAIN*.

"CAPABLE OF REGROWING LIMBS OR ORGANS."

*See ELEPHANTMEN #0

REALLY? THEY CAN *REGROW* LIMBS? I DIDN'T KNOW THAT...

I SIMPLY THOUGHT THEY WERE JUST, Y'KNOW... *SUPER SOLDIERS*...

"I MEAN, IT'S KIND OF LIKE A *CHILD'S* IMAGINING OF SUPER SOLDIERS, ISN'T IT... *CROCS VERSUS HYENAS! HIPPOS VERSUS RHINOS*...

"AND IF YOU *REALLY* WANT TO SELL *TOYS*... WHAT'S MORE ATTRACTIVE TO A SIX YEAR OLD THAT AN *ELEPHANT* WITH A *LASER RIFLE*?!

TOYS? THEO, HERE'S THE THING. I WAS A DESIGNER BABY TOO.

NOT A HYBRID OF COURSE, BUT GENETICALLY MODIFIED TO BE RESISTANT TO THE FCN VIRUS.

"I WASN'T BORN HERE, I WAS BORN IN FRANCE.

"IN A FACILITY WHERE THEY WERE TRYING TO DEVELOP A CURE.

"IT WAS TARGETED AND DESTROYED JUST WEEKS BEFORE THE INVASION...

"BUT MY GRANDFATHER AND MY MOTHER HAD SOMEHOW GOTTEN ME OUT.

"THEY HEADED TO THE COAST, TO CATCH A BOAT...

"MY GRANDFATHER DIDN'T MAKE IT...*

"SOMEHOW MY MOTHER GOT THE TWO OF US TO AMERICA.

*See ELEPHANTMEN: WAR TOYS #1

"AMERICA -- WHERE I GREW UP AROUND ELEPHANTMEN, AND GOT INTO TROUBLE WITH ELEPHANTMEN... IT WAS DURING ALL THAT SANTA MONICA MADNESS* THAT THEY REALIZED I WAS IMMUNE TO THE FCN VIRUS.

*See ELEPHANTMEN #15

"AND WHEN I FOUND MYSELF INCONVENIENTLY IN NEED OF A, UH, TERMINATION, HARVEST WHIPPED OUT THE FETUS AND -- WITHOUT MY KNOWLEDGE OR CONSENT -- IMPLANTED IT IN ANOTHER WOMAN.*

WHOA! HOLD ON A MOMENT, I MEAN, THAT IS A LOT TO TAKE IN!

THEY TOOK YOUR UNBORN CHILD AND PUT IT INTO ANOTHER WOMAN?

IT ALL SOUNDS A BIT HARD TO BELIEVE... WHO TOLD YOU THIS?

*See ELEPHANTMEN #18

I DID.

MIKI IS MY *DAUGHTER*.

WHO ARE YOU?

HI, I'M THEO, NICE TO, ER...

DO PEOPLE IN L.A NOT SHAKE HANDS ANY MORE?

I'M, UM, FROM *ENGLAND*, MAKING A *DOCUMENTARY* ABOUT ELEPHANTMEN.

SO WHY ARE YOU TALKING TO MIKI?

BECAUSE OF HER *INFATUATION* WITH TRANSGENICS, I SUPPOSE?

MAMA!

DON'T LET HIM UNNERVE YOU, THEO.

HE'S NOT MY BIOLOGICAL FATHER.

SUKI, SWEETHEART...

WELL, OKAY, BUT I'M INTERESTED IN WHAT HE HAS TO SAY.

MIKI... PRESUMABLY THIS IS *YOUR* DAUGHTER? IS YOUR FATHER *RAISING HER* ON YOUR BEHALF?

IS *THIS* THE CHILD THAT WAS TRANSPLANTED FROM YOUR *WOMB?*

WHAT KIND OF QUESTIONS ARE THESE?

ARE YOU ACTUALLY, *RECORDING* THIS INTERACTION?

WELL, YES, I MEAN I JUST ASSUMED...

THIS IS A *PRIVATE, FAMILY* MEETING...

HEY!

KRAK

MIKI, THESE VISITS WILL COME TO AN *END* IF THIS KIND OF THING HAPPENS AGAIN!

HAVE YOU *FORGOTTEN* WHAT IS *AT STAKE* HERE?

NO!

THEO IS *HARMLESS*... HE DIDN'T *KNOW*...

I AM PREPARED TO MAKE *ALLOWANCES* FOR YOU AS LONG AS YOU CONTINUE TO COOPERATE WITH *HARVEST*...

BUT YOU HAVE A LOT TO LOSE IF CIRCUMSTANCES CHANGE.

LOOK, I'M SORRY, I DIDN'T THINK...

I WAS USED TO BEING REFERRED TO AS HARMLESS, BUT USUALLY THE CAMERAS WERE STILL ROLLING.

"YOU HAVE A LOT TO LOSE" SOUNDED LIKE A NOT-VERY-THINLY-VEILED THREAT.

THE WHOLE INCIDENT WAS MORE THAN JUST A LITTLE UNNERVING AND I FOUND MYSELF WONDERING IF BRINGING ME ALONG WAS SOMETHING MIKI HAD PROPERLY THOUGHT THROUGH.

BUT IT WAS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT MIKI WAS ACTUALLY A FEW THINKS AHEAD OF BOTH ME **AND** HER FATHER...

FARRELL?

TELL ME YOU GOT THIS?

DON'T WORRY, MIKI...

3

GIVEN THE RIGHT MOTIVATION
EVEN A PACIFIST CAN TURN
INTO A WARRIOR.
ESPECIALLY IF HE HAS
A GUN IN HIS HANDS.

SAINT TROPEZ · FRANCE · 2239

WAR TOYS!

PART THREE

THEO LAROUX MEETS

THE ELEPHANTMEN

THERE WERE ELEPHANTMEN EVERYWHERE!

SOMEHOW, MIKI AND I HAD MANAGED TO GET OURSELVES SEPARATED.

DON'T GET ME WRONG...

FWAM

I KNEW SHE'D HAVE NO PROBLEM LOOKING AFTER HERSELF...

FWAM

IT WAS JUST THAT I WAS RATHER HOPING THAT SHE'D BE LOOKING AFTER ME AS WELL!

PREPARE TO DIE!

UM, NO. NO. I, UM...

DEFINITELY NOT PREPARED TO DIE JUST YET!

ZAM!

OF COURSE, IT REALLY DIDN'T MATTER WHETHER I WAS PREPARED ONE WAY OR THE OTHER...

STOP RIGHT THERE!

I DO KNOW HOW TO USE THIS GUN, YOU KNOW!

AT LEAST, THAT'S WHAT A LOT OF THE PEOPLE I'D SPOKEN TO SEEMED TO BELIEVE...

ZAM!!

AHH!

THE ELEPHANTMEN WERE **GENETICALLY DESIGNED** TO BE WEAPONS OF **MASS DESTRUCTION** -- KILLING PEOPLE WAS **ALWAYS** GOING TO BE THEIR MODUS OPERANDI, RIGHT?

PART OF ME WAS INCLINED TO AGREE WITH THEM!

OKAY, YOU WIN! I SURRENDER... I **SURRENDER!** UM... **PARLAY!**

EVEN WITHOUT A GUN IN HAND, MOST TRANSGENICS STAND **EIGHT FEET TALL** AND SEEM TO BE MADE OUT OF PURE MUSCLE! THEY COULD BREAK YOUR NECK WITH JUST THEIR TRIGGER FINGER.

PARLAY, RIGHT... **TALK** TO ME... ISN'T THAT AN **OPTION** HERE?

FWAM!

OF COURSE, THOSE THAT LIVE BY THE HIGH POWERED LASER RIFLE, DO TEND TO DIE BY THE HIGH POWERED LASER RIFLE...

HAVEN'T YOU LEARNED YET, THEO? IN THIS GAME, YOU REALLY HAVE TO WATCH YOUR BACK!

UM... MIKI...

LOOK BEHIND YOU!

I HAD BEEN STARTING TO WARM TO THE ELEPHANTMEN, BUT I WAS ALSO WONDERING IF CREATURES WITH SUCH DARK ORIGINS WERE CAPABLE OF BEING FULLY REHABILITATED.

MIKI WAS A SELF PROCLAIMED ELEPHANTMEN FAN GIRL, AND I WAS CONCERNED THAT HER FAITH IN THEM MIGHT BE SOMEWHAT MISPLACED...

OH

I'M SURE I WASN'T THE FIRST FELLA WHO DOUBTED THAT THEY HAD HER BEST INTERESTS AT HEART...

GET AWAY FROM HER YOU-YOU...

YOU BIG NOSED BULLY!

OUCH.

THAT HURT MY FEELINGS.

WAIT. I DON'T HAVE ANY.

ZAM

I HAVE FEELINGS!!

THAT GIRL IS UNDER MY PROTECTION!

FWAM

AAAAAAAAAA

FWAM

FWAM

FWAM

GIVEN THE RIGHT MOTIVATION, EVEN A **PACIFIST** CAN TURN INTO A WARRIOR. ESPECIALLY IF HE HAS A **GUN** IN HIS HANDS.

=WHH=

GOOD LORD...

...WHAT NOW?

HEH-HEH...

HEH-HELP...

UH... HUH-- *HOW* CAN I HELP YOU?

HOLDING ON TO YOUR HUMANITY IN THE FACE OF THE THINGS YOU FIND **REPUGNANT** OR **HORRIFYING**, ISN'T THAT THE **REAL** TEST?

PUH-PLEASE...

HELPING THE PEOPLE WHO NEED HELP DESPITE THEMSELVES.

BUH-BUH...

BURN ME!

REALLY?

THAT'S WHAT I'M SUPPOSED TO DO HERE?

BURN THE GUYS SUFFERING FROM THE FCN VIRUS?

THAT'S GOING TO SCORE ME *POINTS?*

YER DARN TOOTIN'! BUT IF YOU *SNOOZE*, YOU *LOOZE*, LAROUX!

MIKI! *NO!*

FWAM

LOS ANGELES · 2261

NO,NO,NO,NO
O!NO,NO,NO,NO
O,NO!NO,NO

THIS IS JUST NOT RIGHT, IT'S NOT RIGHT *AT ALL!*

WHAT'S UP, PUM'KIN... ARE YOU A LITTLE *SQUEAMISH?*

YOU GONNA HAVE TROUBLE KEEPING DOWN YOUR MUSHROOMS ON TOAST TOMORROW?

MIKI, IT'S NOT ABOUT BEING SQUEAMISH... THIS--THIS IS ENTERTAINMENT BASED UPON THE DEATHS OF THOUSANDS -- *MILLIONS!* -- OF *INNOCENTS.*

IT'S JUST A *GAME*, THEO... I JUST THOUGHT IT WAS A FUN WAY FOR YOU TO SEE THE ELEPHANTMEN IN *ACTION*... I MEAN, NO ONE REALLY GETS *HURT* IN VEE-ARR, DO THEY?

DON'T THEY?

YOU DON'T THINK IT *GLORIFIES* THE WAR?

YOU DON'T THINK IT PERPETUATES *FEAR* AND *HATRED?*

MIKI, AREN'T YOU WORRIED THAT ONE DAY YOU'LL PICK UP A *REAL* GUN AND YOU WON'T HESITATE TO *KILL* ONE OF THE ELEPHANTMEN WITH IT?

THIS PLACE.

I'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE.

NEXGEN. THEY MESSED WITH MY HEAD, WITH MY MEMORIES, THEY WANTED ME TO *FORGET* THIS PLACE, FORGET *SCARLET.**

*See ELEPHANTMEN 2260: MEMORIES OF THE FUTURE

+++ MISTER FARRELL ++ THIS ONE + BELIEVES THE NAME OF THIS STATUE + IS *VERITY* + NOT SCARLET +

MAYBE, DILLON, BUT THEY HAVE ONE THING IN COMMON. *HAD* ONE THING IN COMMON --

SAN GABRIEL • 2261

THEY WERE BOTH CARRYING BABIES.

THIS PLACE -- NEXGEN -- WAS *MAKING ELEPHANTMEN BABIES.* BUT IT WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN SHUT DOWN...*

SO WHAT BRINGS MIKI'S FATHER HERE?

*See ELEPHANTMEN 2260: THE LEAST, THE LOST & THE LAST

MIKI'S BOYFRIEND WAS A HIPPOPOTAMINE ELEPHANTMAN BY THE NAME OF **HIERONYMOUS FLASK**, "HIP" FOR SHORT. SHE HAD BROUGHT ME TO DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES TO SPEND SOME TIME HANGING OUT WITH HIP...

WELL, THIS PLACE IS PRETTY AMAZING, ISN'T IT?

NOT ONLY DOES IT HAVE A GAMES ROOM, A SPA AND SAUNA BUT ALSO THIS INCREDIBLE ***GYM!***

THE GOVERNMENT SEEMS TO TAKE ITS RESPONSIBILITIES TO TRANSGENICS VERY SERIOUSLY, DON'T YOU THINK? MIGHT ONE EVEN SAY THEY ***SPOIL*** YOU?

SPOIL ***US?***

THE U.S GOVERNMENT? THEO, GIMME A BREAK.

DID NO ONE TELL YOU MOST OF US ARE ***FURLOUGHED*** RIGHT NOW?

MAYOR SHORE IS NOT EXACTLY INTERESTED IN ***CIVIL LIBERTIES*** FOR ELEPHANTMEN. UNLESS YOU HAPPEN TO HAVE BIG BUSINESS INTERESTS LIKE ***OBADIAH HORN.****

*See ELEPHANTMEN 2260: THE LEAST, THE LOST & THE LAST

BUT LOOK AT ALL THE FACILITIES THAT ARE AVAILABLE TO YOU HERE...

THESE -- *UHHH* -- ***FACILITIES*** WERE ***GIFTED*** TO THE ELEPHANTMEN BY ONE OF OUR OWN... ***SCHEREZADE.***

"SHORTY" WAS A ***SELF-MADE ELEPHANTMAN.*** HE DIDN'T DEPEND ON THE ***STATE*** FOR HANDOUTS AND HE LEFT THIS PLACE TO US IN HIS WILL SO THAT ***WE*** DON'T HAVE TO EITHER.*

*ELEPHANTMEN 2261: THE DEATH OF SHORTY

IT NEVER OCCURRED TO ME THAT YOU GUYS NEEDED TO ***WORK OUT...***

DIDYA THINK WE WERE *GENETICALLY DESIGNED* TO BE MUSCULAR, HM? TRY LIFTING THAT DUMBBELL.

OKAY, I'LL GIVE IT A GO.

=UNHHHH=

=WHOOF=

GOOD GRAVY, IT'S ***IMPOSSIBLE!***

YEAH, WELL, WE ***ARE*** DESIGNED TO BE ***PHYSICALLY*** SUPERIOR TO REGULAR HUMANS, SO THERE IS THAT...

PHYSICALLY SUPERIOR IN *EVERY* WAY?

I MEAN... I DON'T WANT TO GET TOO *PERSONAL* OR ANYTHING...

BUT, WELL, I HAD HEARD THAT YOU WERE, YOU KNOW...

NO, I MEAN, WELL, LET'S JUST SAY THAT I WAS *SURPRISED* TO FIND OUT YOU WERE INVOLVED IN A *RELATIONSHIP* WITH MIKI...

YOU KNOW...

WHAT? INCAPABLE OF PUTTING ON *BELLY FAT?* IF THAT WERE TRUE, I WOULDN'T BE IN THE *GYM*, WOULD I?

I MEAN... AN *INTIMATE* RELATIONSHIP.

OH, I GET IT, YOU WANT TO KNOW IF MY *EQUIPMENT* WORKS...

YOU'VE HEARD ALL THOSE *MAPPO* STORIES ABOUT US BEING *CASTRATED*, RIGHT?

I'M SORRY, THEO, HIP FLASK DOESN'T KISS AND TELL. ASK A BETTER QUESTION.

SO WHAT ABOUT THAT PAINTING UP THERE?

EVEN THE MOST *CASUAL* OBSERVER CAN SEE THAT AS EVIDENCE OF AN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A TRANSGENIC AND A HUMAN WOMAN OF THE UH, OPPOSITE SEX.

MAYBE I MEAN *SPECIES*.

SO WHO *IS* THAT AND WHO IS THE *LADY* ON HIS ARM THERE?

HUP! HUP!

≥UFF≤

THAT'S ≥OOF≤ *SHORTY*. AND HIS FRIEND, *SAPPHIRE*.

I'M PRETTY ≥HMF≤ CERTAIN THEY WERE JUST GOOD FRIENDS. SHORTY WAS ≥HUFF≤ A GENTLEMAN.

YOU MEAN, PLATONIC? IS THAT ALL YOU'RE ALLOWED? I MEAN, SURELY *OBADIAH HORN* AND *SAHARA'S* RELATIONSHIP IS ANYTHING *BUT* PLATONIC...

YOU WERE AT THEIR *WEDDING*, RI--

SHUT IT!

THEO, YOU'RE A NICE GUY, BUT WHATEVER *STORY* IT IS YOU'RE LOOKING FOR, *DROP IT*.

TAKE IT FROM ME, STAY *AWAY* FROM THOSE TWO. *OBADIAH HORN* IS *NOT* AN ELEPHANTMAN YOU SHOULD BE MESSING WITH.

NOT IF YOU WANT TO LIVE A LONG LIFE.

+++ THIS ONE IS CONCERNED ++ THAT OUR VEHICLE IS + PARKED OPENLY IN THE PARKING LOT +

I'VE BEEN A PRIVATE EYE FOR A WHILE, DILLON

TRUST ME, NO ONE LOOKS IN A PARKING LOT FOR A CAR.

EXCEPT MAYBE A SYNTHETIC LIKE YOU.

AND WHEN IT COMES TO THAT, THERE REALLY AREN'T MANY SYNTHETICS LIKE YOU.

+++ THIS ONE ++ IS FLATTERED THAT + YOU RECOGNIZE THIS ONE'S UNIQUENESS +

YEAH, WELL, THAT WASN'T REALLY A COMPLIMENT...

HOWEVER, I MIGHT NEED YOUR HELP HERE...

BECAUSE THIS KEY HAS BEEN IN MY POCKET A LONG TIME AND I HAD SOMEHOW FORGOTTEN IT WAS THERE.*

I'D BE MORE THAN A LITTLE SURPRISED IF IT ACTUALLY WORKS...

*Since ELEPHANTMEN #54

WELL, I'LL BE A MONKEY'S UNCLE. WE'RE IN!

'SFUNNY. I DON'T HAVE AN ENTIRELY ***CLEAR*** MEMORY OF ***WHEN*** I WAS HERE, BUT BEING HERE... THE MEMORIES ARE FLOODING BACK...

+++ THIS ONE FAILS TO SEE ++ THE HUMOR IN THIS SITUATION +

+ WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO DOWNLOAD A PERSONALITY WITH A MORE APPROPRIATE SENSE OF HUMOR + ?

OR MAYBE JUST ONE WITH A BETTER BODY...?

YOU JUST CAN'T KEEP YOURSELF ***AWAY*** FROM ME, CAN YOU?

WHAT--? ***SCARLET?***

IN THE FLESH...!

WELL, NOT REALLY, JUST GIVING ***YOUR*** FLESH SOME GOOSEBUMPS, I'LL BET.

I'M SORRY, JACK, I KNOW YOU ***WANT*** ME, BUT LOVE DON'T LIVE HERE ANY MORE -- I WAS WHISKED AWAY...*

*See ELEPHANTMEN #80

OF COURSE, IT'S THOSE ***ENGRAMS*** NEXGEN IMPLANTED IN YOUR HEAD MESSING UP YOUR MEMORIES AND, OOPS!, HERE I AM AGAIN.

BUT I ***DO*** REMEMBER, THERE WAS A NEW HYBRID PROGRAM HERE...

AND YOU WERE ONE OF-- A ***HUNDRED*** WOMEN ***IMPREGNATED*** WITH ***TRANSGENIC DNA***...

JACK... YOU DO REMEMBER! ***YOU CLEVER BOY!***

YOU MIGHT FIND ME YET!

NEXGEN WAS SHUT DOWN, YOU AND THE OTHERS DISAPPEARED...

OUR DISAPPEARANCE IS JUST PART OF THE ***MYSTERY***, ISN'T IT? *WHERE DID WE GO?* WHAT HAPPENED TO OUR ***OFFSPRING***, AND WHAT THREAD HAVE YOU PULLED ON THAT HAS BROUGHT YOU BACK HERE?

IT'S EXCITING, ISN'T IT?

I'LL GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS, SCARLET. I WILL FIND YOU.

+++ THIS ONE APPRECIATES THE ++ SENTIMENT, MISTER + FARRELL +

+++ HOWEVER THIS ONE ++ IS NOT + SCARLET +

DON'T I JUST KNOW IT.

+++ WOULD YOU LIKE ++ TO CALL THIS ONE + "SCARLET?"+

NO! ...MAYBE LATER.

JUST... LISTEN, DILLON.

SCARLET WAS A VICTIM OF NEXGEN. SHE WAS KEPT HERE IN SOME KIND OF GESTATION DEVICE THAT KEPT HER UNCONSCIOUS WHILE A TRANSGENIC GREW WITHIN HER.

SINCE THEN, THAT OPERATION WAS ***SHUT DOWN***. DON'T ASK ME WHAT HAPPENED, BUT IF MIKI'S FATHER HAS LED US BACK HERE, I DON'T THINK THIS PLACE IS BEING TURNED INTO A ***HOTEL*** OR A ***CASINO!***

MY MEMORIES OF THIS PLACE MIGHT NOT BE A HUNDRED PER CENT...

BUT I THINK I KNOW WHERE TO FIND THE BUSINESS END OF THIS HELLHOLE...

MUD'S BLOOD...

...IT SEEMS, MISTER RAVEN, THAT WE HAVE INTERESTS IN A NUMBER OF CONCERNS FROM WHICH WE MIGHT ALL PROFIT...

INDEED. I VERY MUCH APPRECIATE YOUR INTEREST AND INVESTMENT IN OUR WORK...

I AM PREPARED TO ***OVERLOOK*** THE FACT THAT THE HORN CORPORATION REMOVED ALL THE SUBJECTS WE HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN... ***DEVELOPING*** HERE.

IT WAS... *NECESSARY* FOR ME TO RESOLVE A... ***PERSONAL*** ISSUE.

YES. YOUR WIFE, ***SAHARA***, I UNDERSTAND THAT HER MOTHER WAS IN FACT ONE OF THE ORIGINAL HOSTS OF AN ELEPHANTMAN.

AND NOT JUST ANY ELEPHANTMAN. ***HIP FLASK***.

SAHARA MUST HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO KNOWLEDGE OF THIS NEW OPERATION.

SHE MUST NOT KNOW OF MY PLANS TO RAISE AN ENTIRELY NEW ARMY OF ELEPHANTMEN.

I APPRECIATE YOUR CANDOR, HIP, BUT THE ONLY WOMAN KNOWN TO HAVE CARRIED THE *CHILD* OF A TRANSGENIC...

IS SAHARA.

WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH HER?

I MEAN, I GET THAT SHE'S NOTORIOUSLY DIFFICULT TO GET IN TOUCH WITH...

AND I'M SURE YOU KNOW ABOUT THE MYSTERIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE DEATHS OF THE LAST JOURNALISTS WHO TRIED TO INTERVIEW HER...*

*See ELEPHANTMEN #6

WHY DO YOU THINK I'M *TELLING* YOU TO **AVOID** SAHARA AND HORN?

BUT CAN YOU MAYBE GET ME AN *INTRODUCTION?* YOU COULD EVEN BE MY CHAPERONE!

THEO, WITH THE BEST WILL IN THE WORLD, YOU CAN'T JUST MAKE AN *APPOINTMENT* WITH SAHARA. SHE'S NOT A *HAIRDRESSER!*

I WAS AFRAID OF THIS.

IF THE CUTE ENGLISHMAN WANTS TO SEE SAHARA...

I'M SURE *I* CAN MAKE THAT HAPPEN!

AH! YOU MUST BE *SAPPHIRE!*

To Be Continued!

4

ONCE YOU HAVE PROVEN
THAT A WOMAN CAN DELIVER
HUMAN/ANIMAL HYBRIDS,
YOU CAN CREATE LEGISLATION
THAT MAKES DOING SO ILLEGAL,
BUT YOU CAN'T REALLY STOP
IT FROM HAPPENING AGAIN.

SAN GABRIEL · CALIFORNIA · 2261

INTRUDERS! EXPLAIN YOURSELVES!

WHOA! NONONO
WE'RE -- ER -- WE'RE WITH --
+++ THIS ONE + + IS A MAINTENANCE DROID + THIS OTHER ONE IS + THE JANITOR +
THAT'S RIGHT, THAT'S RIGHT, I'M THE, UH, JANITOR!
AND IS THAT A BROOM IN YOUR HAND?
BECAUSE IT LOOKS MORE LIKE A GUN TO ME, AND IF YOU HAVE COME HERE WITH A GUN, YOU HAD BETTER BE PREPARED TO USE IT!
WELL, YEAH, OKAY, YOU GOT ME, IT IS A GUN...
AND I AM PREPARED TO USE IT!
I WAS HOPING YOU'D SAY THAT!
HHH GU
FTAM FTAM
HELL'S SQUAKKIN' TEETH!
STAY BACK!

UH

SPUT

SPCH

FTAM

FTAM

+++ THIS ONE +
+ HAS A SUGGESTION
+ FARRELL +

+++ RUN +++

ZKK

UNNH!

ZZZAKKK

ZZZAKK

NGNYHHH

ZZZZZZAK

YOU ARE MERELY A SYNTHETIC.

ZK

ZK

FWUNCH

HAD MAN FOUND SYNTHETICS USEFUL IN WARFARE...

THE A.I WARS MIGHT HAVE ENDED VERY DIFFERENTLY...

... THERE MIGHT NEVER HAVE BEEN A NEED FOR CREATURES LIKE MYSELF.

ELEPHANTMEN!

AND HUMANS ARE ALWAYS UNDERESTIMATING ELEPHANTMEN.

OH, I GET IT, ALL RIGHT...

ELEPHANTMEN ARE STRONG, FAST AND PRETTY MUCH BULLETPROOF...

AND SOME OF THEM ARE BULLIES LIKE YOU -- KILLERS WHO HAVE NEVER LEFT THE WAR BEHIND!

THE ONLY THING I DON'T GET IS HOW A KIND HEARTED WOMAN LIKE SAHARA COULD BE SO BLIND TO THAT.

WASN'T HER FATHER A MONSTER TOO?

OH, I WILL ENJOY *RIPPING* THAT TONGUE OUT OF YOUR *MOUTH* AND FORCE FEEDING IT *BACK* TO YOU.

OH, WOW...

DESERT BREEZES

DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES

THAT'S QUITE A *CROWD* THAT'S GATHERED DOWN THERE, HASN'T IT?

IT'S THE LAUNCH OF SAHARA'S *FALL* COLLECTION...

EVERYTHING SHE DOES IS NEWS.

PEOPLE COME FROM *THOUSANDS* OF MILES AWAY JUST TO CATCH A *GLIMPSE* OF HER.

MIKI, HAVE *YOU* MET SAHARA?

KINDA.

I HELPED DELIVER HER BABY.*

MIKI...

*See ELEPHANTMEN 2260: THE RED QUEEN

INTERESTING.

WAIT.

DID YOU JUST SAY YOU HELPED DELIVER HER *BABY?*

WHAT DID IT *LOOK* LIKE? WAS IT HALF HUMAN, HALF, UM, *RHINOCEROID?*

IS THAT EVEN A *WORD?* I DON'T KNOW. *RHINOEAN?* *RHINO-PLASTIC?*

HE WAS *CUTE*, THEO. HE WAS *MORE* THAN CUTE...

YEAH, I MEAN, C'MON...

THEO LAROUX MEETS THE ELEPHANTMEN

"... JUST LOOK AT THE MOM!"

I WAS IN LOS ANGELES TO MEET **THE ELEPHANTMEN.**

BUT I ALSO WANTED TO MEET THE WOMEN THAT SEEMED TO LOVE THEM, AND TOP OF **THAT** LIST WAS **SAHARA,** THE MUCH-LOVED **BRIDE** OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL ELEPHANTMEN OF THEM ALL, **OBADIAH HORN.**

PART FOUR

DESERT BREEZES

I CAN'T HELP BUT FEEL THERE IS A SORT OF *THEME* HERE.

MOTHERS WHOSE *CHILDREN* WERE TAKEN FROM THEM.

YOU GOT THAT RIGHT.

*MIKI -- WHO HAD ALREADY HELPED ME MEET A NUMBER OF ELEPHANTMEN, INCLUDING HER BOYFRIEND, **HIP FLASK** -- HAD SEEMED A LITTLE IRRITABLE AND DISTRACTED EVER SINCE I ASKED HER TO DRIVE US OVER TO SAHARA'S SHOWROOM STORE...*

IN SAHARA'S CASE, AS A CHILD *HER* MOTHER WAS TAKEN FROM HER TO BIRTH *ELEPHANTMEN*, RIGHT?*

AND HER *OWN* CHILD WAS TAKEN BY HER *FATHER!**

*See ELEPHANTMEN #6 & ELEPHANTMEN #62

YOU MEAN *SERENGHETI?*

WOW, THAT'S *INTENSE*.

WHY DID HE DO THAT?

WHY DOES ANYONE SEPARATE A CHILD FROM HER MOTHER?

CONTROL.

BECAUSE THEY ARE THREATENED BY A WOMAN WHO HAS POWER AND INFLUENCE.

JUST LOOK...

SAHARA INSPIRES PEOPLE.

IT DOESN'T MATTER TO THEM THAT SHE IS THE BRIDE OF *OBADIAH HORN*.

NO ONE HERE IS THINKING ABOUT ELEPHANTMEN...

YOU'RE RIGHT.

SHE'S A *ROLE MODEL*, ISN'T SHE?

SO, WHEN CAN I SEE HER, SAPPHIRE?

WELL, YOU CAN *SEE* HER RIGHT NOW...

HELLO, EVERYONE, **HELLO!** YES, YES, SHE **IS** HERE!

IF I MAY SAY A FEW WORDS...

THANK YOU... UH, I HAVE, UH, ONLY KNOWN **SAHARA** AND HER HUSBAND, **OBADIAH HORN**, FOR A SHORT WHILE.

BUT ALREADY, THEY ARE LIKE... UH, **FAMILY** TO ME...

ISN'T THAT ***MAYOR DOUGLAS SHORE?!***

DIDN'T HE RUN ON A PLATFORM OF EXCLUSION?*

I THOUGHT HE ***HATED*** THE ELEPHANTMEN!

WHAT DID I MISS?

*See ELEPHANTMEN 2260: THE LAST, THE LOST & THE LEAST

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, A WARM HAND, PLEASE, FOR THE ARTIST BEHIND DESERT BREEZES, **SAHARA!**

SAHARA!

THANK YOU, MAYOR SHORE...

THANK YOU EVERYONE...

"I AM SO HAPPY TO BE HERE TO INTRODUCE OUR FALL COLLECTION..."

ALL THESE DESIGNS WILL SOON BE AVAILABLE...

WOW! WOWWWW... SO THAT'S **SAHARA**, RIGHT...?

AS PROMISED, *IN THE FLESH!*

DON'T EVEN ASK HOW MUCH ***AIRSPACE*** IS HERE TODAY.

WHEN DO I ACTUALLY GET TO ***MEET*** HER, SAPPHIRE?

YOU SAID YOU WANTED TO ***SEE*** HER... YOU CAN SEE HER FROM ***HERE***, CAN'T YOU?

I ***TOLD*** HIM SO...

WELL, SHE'S RIGHT, ***HIP***, THIS IS ABOUT AS CLOSE AS HE'S EVER GOING TO GET TO AN AUDIENCE.

HEY! WE SHOULD SELL TICKETS FOR PEOPLE TO MEET ***YOU***. I BET WE'D MAKE A ***FORTUNE***.

Y'KNOW, I'VE MET A ***LOT*** OF CELEBRITIES IN MY TIME, BUT I NEVER FELT LIKE THIS BEFORE... IT'S LIKE A FEELING OF, I GUESS IT'S ***EUPHORIA***, ISN'T IT?

JUST ***SEEING*** SAHARA IS GIVING ME A SORT OF ***TINGLY SENSATION***, LIKE WHEN YOU FALL IN LOVE AND GET ALL ***GIDDY***.

WELL, THAT'S PART OF HER JOB, ISN'T IT?

TO MAKE US FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH THE IDEA OF THE ELEPHANTMEN WALKING AMONGST US.

AND TO ***SEDATE*** THE ELEPHANTMEN.

WHAT?

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, SAPPHIRE?

ALL THOSE NIGHTS YOU PLAYED POKER WITH ***SHORTY*** AND HE NEVER TOLD YOU THIS?

ALL THE ELEPHANTMEN LOVE SAHARA BECAUSE YOU WERE ALL EMOTIONALLY ***TETHERED*** TO HER DURING YOUR REHABILITATION.*

WHEN YOU SEE HER, THE AMOUNT OF ***SEROTONIN*** PRODUCED IN YOUR BODIES INCREASES AND ANY ***ANXIETY*** YOU MIGHT BE EXPERIENCING IS IMMEDIATELY SOOTHED.

WHY DO YOU THINK THERE ARE SO MANY ***DESERT BREEZES*** IMAGES ALL AROUND THE CITY?

*See ELEPHANTMEN 2260: MEMORIES OF THE FUTURE

YOU'RE *WRONG!* WE LOVE HER BECAUSE SHE LOVES ***US***... SHE *ACCEPTS* US AS WE ARE... SHE ***UNDERSTANDS*** US.

IT DOES KIND OF MAKE SENSE, THOUGH, DOESN'T IT?

I MEAN, FOR ANY SOCIETY TO WELCOME AND ACCEPT *SUPER SOLDIERS* INTO IT'S, UM, ***BOSOM***...

YOU'D WANT TO BE SURE THAT THEY ***BEHAVED***, I MEAN, WOULDN'T YOU?

KIND OF *MIND-CONTROL CREEPY* THOUGH.

NOT THAT SAHARA DOESN'T LOVE THE ELEPHANTMEN, HIP. I'M SURE THAT SHE DEVELOPED A SORT OF ***MOTHERLY TENDERNESS*** TOWARD THEM.

YES, SAHARA LOVES THE ELEPHANTMEN, SHE LOVES ***OBADIAH***.

BUT ITS NOT LIKE THE LOVE ***SHORTY*** FELT FOR ***ME***.

*MENTION OF SAHARA'S **HUSBAND** DID MAKE ME WONDER...*

AND THAT'S *NOTHIN'* COMPARED TO HOW MUCH I LOVE ***YOU***, BIG GUY...

...WHERE WAS OBADIAH HORN?

WE FOUND HIM...

AND IF I'M NOT VERY MUCH MISTAKEN, DILLON... THAT IS ***OBADIAH HORN*** WITH MIKI'S FATHER ...

AND THAT MEANS TROUBLE.

SAHARA MUST HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO KNOWLEDGE OF THIS NEW OPERATION.

SHE MUST NOT KNOW OF MY PLANS TO RAISE AN ENTIRELY NEW ARMY OF ELEPHANTMEN.

TO THAT END, I AM HAPPY TO INTRODUCE ***KENZO YOSHITOKU.***

MISTER YOSHITOKU HAS AGREED TO ACT ON OUR BEHALF IN THE PROCUREMENT OF CARRIERS FOR YOUR BREEDING PROGRAM.

IT WILL BE MY HONOR TO ASSIST YOU IN ANY WAY I CAN, MISTER HORN...

AN HONOR? PERHAPS. BUT I HAVE WORKED WITH YAKUZA BEFORE, MISTER YOSHITOKU, AND I AM WELL AWARE THAT HONOR COMES WITH A PRICE.

YOU HAVE ASKED US TO PROVIDE YOUNG WOMEN OF ASIAN ORIGIN FOR YOUR PROGRAM.

HUMAN TRAFFIC IS OUR AREA OF EXPERTISE.

AN ***EXPENSIVE*** AREA OF EXPERTISE.

WHAT THE HELL...?

INDEED. MISTER RAVEN INFORMS ME YOU HAVE OFFERED YOUR OWN WIFE AND DAUGHTER AS EXPERIMENTAL TEST SUBJECTS...

SO TELL ME MORE ABOUT HONOR.

DID I JUST HEAR WHAT I THINK I HEARD?

+++ MISTER HORN BELIEVES THAT MISTER YOSHITOKU HAS OFFERED HIS WIFE AND ++

DILLON! THAT WAS RHETORICAL, KEEP IT DOWN!

?

UM... DID ANYONE CALL FOR *PIZZA?*

I RECOGNIZE THAT MAN!

HE IS AN ASSOCIATE OF HIP FLASK!*

FLASK, OF COURSE.

*They met in ELEPHANTMEN 2260: THE LAST, THE LOST & THE LEAST

HE MUST NOT LEAVE HERE ALIVE!

WATCHING SAHARA ADDRESS THE CROWDS OUTSIDE DESERT BREEZES, I WAS STRUCK WITH THE REALIZATION THAT THE WORLD SHE KNEW **AS A CHILD** WAS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT TO THE ONE IN WHICH SHE LIVED NOW.

AS HERACLITUS SAID, NO MAN, OR WOMAN, EVER STEPS IN THE SAME RIVER TWICE, FOR IT'S NOT THE SAME **RIVER** AND SHE'S NOT THE SAME **PERSON**...

ONCE YOU HAVE PROVEN THAT A WOMAN CAN DELIVER HUMAN/ANIMAL HYBRIDS, YOU CAN CREATE LEGISLATION THAT MAKES DOING SO **ILLEGAL**, BUT YOU CAN'T REALLY **STOP** IT FROM HAPPENING AGAIN.

YOU CAN'T PUT IT BACK IN THE BOX AS THEY SAY.

I HAD LEARNED THAT SAHARA'S MOTHER WAS GIVEN TO **MAPPO** BY HER OWN FATHER...

IT MADE ME WONDER WHAT KIND OF MAN WOULD TURN OVER THE MOTHER OF HIS OWN CHILDREN TO BIRTH THE **STRANGE BODIES** SCIENTISTS DESIGNED IN A LABORATORY?

AND I ALSO REALIZED THAT IT WASN'T JUST MEN TURNING IN MOTHERS, IT WAS MOTHERS, BROTHERS, SISTERS AND FRIENDS. AND WHY? AT WHAT COST?

MIKI!

LOCK ONTO MY LOCATION, FIND HIP AND GET OVER HERE!

WHAT?! WHERE ARE YOU?!

HIP'S HERE WITH ME RIGHT NOW--

GOOD! I MIGHT STILL BE ALIVE WHEN HE GETS HERE!

WAS THAT JACK?!

STRAP IN, HIP...

THEO, SAPPHIRE, SIT DOWN AND HOLD ON...

WAIT-- WHAT? BUT-BUT WE'RE HERE TO SEE *SAHARA*...

PLANS CHANGE... TIME FOR SOME *SIGHTSEEING*, THEO!

ALL SET? OKAY, *ALL TOGETHER NOW*...

Wooo-Hooo!

I HAD A SYNTHETIC ASSISTANT ONCE..

?!

WHUP

A TOASTER WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE USEFUL!

+++ UNH ++

+++ THIS ONE MAY HAVE ++ SOME UPGRADES +

ZZK

+++ YOUR ASSISTANT ++ LACKED +

IS THAT SO?

ZZT

ZZZT

+++ SO + MONKEY SEE ++ MONKEY DO +

STEP CLOSER AND SAY THAT, *ROBOT*...

ZK

ZZT

MIKI? TELL ME YOU ARE ON YOUR WAY!

YOU WON'T GET AWAY... YOU'RE AS GOOD AS DEAD ALREADY!

MEET ME ON THE ROOF!

OUFF!

AHHHH!

MIKI! JUST FOLLOW MY SIGNAL!

GUYS--?

WE GOT EYES ON YOU, JACK... STAY THERE!

MAKE IT QUICK...

SMASH

SOMEHOW I *KNOW* THIS PLACE...*

SCARLET... NEXGEN...

BUT WHERE *HORN* FITS IN BEATS ME...

HIP!

HELL, AS HE'S HERE, I GUESS I CAN ASK!

OBADIAH, IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM WITH *HIM*, YOU HAVE A PROBLEM WITH *ME!*

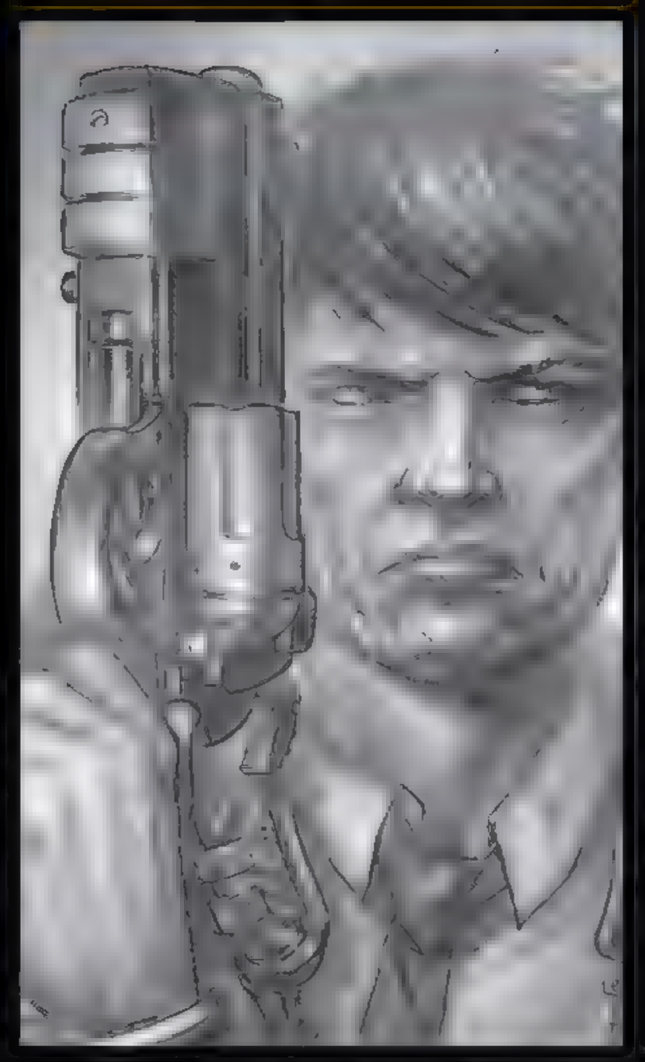
FLASK...

I HAVE NOTHING *BUT* PROBLEMS WITH YOU!

WELL, THEO, YOU WANTED TO GET *UP CLOSE* WITH OBADIAH HORN, LOOKS LIKE YOU HAVE A *RINGSIDE SEAT.*

*IT WAS A **RINGSIDE SEAT** ALL RIGHT -- I WASN'T SURE WHAT I WAS ABOUT TO SEE UNFOLD, BUT I HAD A HORRIBLE FEELING THAT IT WAS GOING TO BE **BLOODY!***

5



THIS WAS A HEAVYWEIGHT BATTLE TO THE DEATH. THE GATHERING STORM SEEMED TO UNDERLINE THE BIBLICAL STAKES THAT THEY WERE FIGHTING FOR.

THEO LAROUX MEETS THE ELEVENTH MEN

FLASK! WE'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE! REMEMBER?

NEXGEN! THEY MESSED WITH OUR MEMORIES...

YEAH, I DO REMEMBER...

SAN GABRIEL • CALIFORNIA • 2261

"...THAT STATUE... 'VERITY'... TRUTH!"

AIN'T THAT RIGHT -- THIS PLACE WAS LIKE ANOTHER MAPPO!

JUST ANOTHER LAB TO GROW A NEW BREED OF ELEPHANTMEN!

NEXGEN HIRED ME BECAUSE SOMEONE WAS STEALING FROM THEM. EGGS. FERTILIZED WITH ELEPHANTMEN DNA.

"THE THIEF WAS SCARLET. A NEXGEN EMPLOYEE. I TRACKED HER DOWN BUT THEY REPLACED MY MEMORIES TO KEEP THEIR SECRETS SAFE.

"AND THEY KEPT HER HERE, IN A COMA, IMPREGNATED WITH THAT SAME DNA! BUT THEY MADE ONE MISTAKE. THEY TETHERED HER MEMORIES AND THOUGHTS TO MINE.

"AND SHE LED US BACK HERE!"*

*Read the Whole Story in ELEPHANTMEN 2260: MEMORIES OF THE FUTURE

"SHE LAID THE WHOLE OPERATION BARE FOR US... LED US TO APOSTROPHE, A SCIENTIST WHO WAS JUST AS MUCH A PRISONER AS SCARLET WAS, AND THE ARCHITECT OF SOME KIND OF MEMORY CONTROL CENTER...

"AN EXPERIMENT IN CONTROLLING PEOPLE THROUGH THEIR MEMORIES AND DREAMS... TETHERING THEM TO FRIENDS AND RELATIVES SO THAT THEY WOULDN'T BE MISSED...

PART FIVE

THE FAMILY ARSENAL

"...SO THAT THEY COULD CARRY AND *BIRTH* ELEPHANTMEN AND BE SENT BACK TO THEIR ORDINARY LIVES WITHOUT SO MUCH AS A FAINT RECOLLECTION OF WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM.

"THAT *APE*, CALLS HIMSELF *RAVEN*. HE WAS RUNNING THIS WHOLE OPERATION...

"HE MUTTERED SOME KIND OF *CODE WORD*... MADE US FORGET... BUT I REMEMBER EVERYTHING NOW...

AND YOUR OLD *ROOM-MATE* OVER THERE IS STARTING THIS SHITSHOW BACK UP!

THAT'S *RIGHT.*

LET'S BEGIN BY WIPING YOUR *MEMORY* AGAIN!

THIS TIME, *PERMANENTLY!*

I'VE HEARD ENOUGH!

THWOK

YOU DON'T GET TO THREATEN MY FRIENDS AND STAY UPRIGHT!

THWAK

YOU FORGET, FLASK...

I HAVE EVER BEEN YOUR SUPERIOR IN EVERY WAY!

POW

I WAS IN LOS ANGELES TO MEET THE ELEPHANTMEN.

I HAD ATTACHED MYSELF TO ONE OF THE ELEPHANTMEN'S GIRLFRIENDS, A CAB DRIVER CALLED **MIKI**. CONSEQUENTLY, I HAD GOT MUCH MORE OF AN INSIGHT INTO THE LIVES OF THE TRANSGENICS THAN I MAY HAVE BARGAINED FOR.

WATCHING THESE TWO, **BRUTISH** CREATURES **ATTACKING** EACH OTHER MADE ME REALIZE HOW THEIR VERY **BEINGS** APPEALED TO SOMETHING VERY **PRIMAL**, DEEP DOWN INSIDE ME.

AS RAIN STARTED TO FALL AND THEIR ELEPHANTMANO-A-MANO ENGAGEMENT CONTINUED, I COULD SEE THAT BOTH MIKI AND **SAPPHIRE** WERE EQUALLY EXCITED BY THE FIGHT. WHO WOULD **WIN**? WHO MIGHT EVEN **DIE**?

MIKI! GET ME OFF THIS ROOF!

I WANTED TO LOOK AWAY, BUT I COULDN'T. THIS WAS NOT A VEE-AR SIMULATION, THIS WAS A HEAVYWEIGHT BATTLE **TO THE DEATH**. THE GATHERING STORM SEEMED TO UNDERLINE THE **BIBLICAL** STAKES THAT THEY WERE FIGHTING FOR.

CAIN VERSUS ABEL! BROTHER AGAINST BROTHER, ONE INTENT ON REPEATING THE FAILINGS OF THE FATHER, THE OTHER INTENT ON MAKING SURE THOSE SINS STAYED IN THE **PAST**.

HERE! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

YEAH, THANKS -- WHO ARE ***YOU***?

UM, I'M ***THEO***, I'M, UM... WELL THIS MIGHT NOT BE THE RIGHT TIME TO ***EXPLAIN***...

JACK! THIS IS STILL A ***RESCUE*** MISSION, RIGHT?

DID YOU FIND MY MOM?

DAMMIT... ***DILLON--!***

COME ON, ROBOT, YOU WANT TO FIGHT...?

ZK

+++ THIS ONE IS ONLY HERE ON A MISSION ++ OF LOCATION AND RETRIEVAL +

+++ BUT THIS ONE *WILL* KILL YOU ++ IF YOU INTERFERE +

I AM A GENETICALLY ENGINEERED APE/HUMAN HYBRID...

YOU ARE LITTLE MORE THAN AN AUTONOMOUS *TOY*...

YOU WILL BE THE FIRST TO DIE!

ZZZZZT

+++ AAAAAH +

ZZZT

+++

THANK YOU. IT HAS BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE I GOT MY HANDS DIRTY.

IT FEELS GOOD.

KENZO!

+++

+++ REROUTING SYSTEMS TO *SECONDARY* POWER SOURCE ++

+++ MONKEY MAN ++

+++ YOU WERE WARNED ++

RAVEN!

WHAT--?

+++ KENZO + + YOSHITOKU +

+++ STAY WHERE YOU ARE +

DILLON?

DILLON, THIS IS FARRELL, ARE YOU OKAY?

+++ THIS ONE ++ HAS + RECOVERED +

THANK GOD!

WHERE ARE YOU?

+++ THIS ONE + + HAS + INFORMATION REGARDING THE LOCATION + OF MIKI'S MOTHER +

MIKI'S *MOTHER?* IS THERE SOMETHING YOU GUYS HAVE BEEN KEEPING FROM ME?

WHERE IS SHE? WE CAN MEET YOU THERE.

DO YOU THINK YOU HAVE ANY CHANCE OF STOPPING ME?

WHAP

WHAM

I CONTROL THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES!

I CONTROL THE POLICE!

MAYBE -- BUT YOU DON'T CONTROL ME!

I DON'T NEED TO, FLASK. YOU HAVE NO MONEY, NO POWER AND NO INFLUENCE!

YOU ARE A WASHED UP MUNT JUST LIKE ALL THE REST.

AND YOUR WIFE IS MY SISTER...

WHAKT

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MAKES YOU?

I'LL TELL YOU!

YOU ARE A REALLY TERRIBLE BROTHER-IN-LAW!

I DON'T CARE ABOUT YOU--

SAHARA DOESN'T CARE ABOUT YOU-!

SHUMP

KRAKT

WELL NOW YOU'VE GONE AN' DONE IT! INSULTING MY FRIENDS IS ONE THING...

MARRYING MY SISTER, HELL, SHE'S RESPONSIBLE FOR HER OWN DECISIONS...

BUT NOW...

NOW I'M REALLY MAD...

NOW, MY PANTS ARE WET...

AND I'MA GONNA HAVETA KICK YOUR **BONY ASS** ALL THE WAY BACK TO YOUR **PLAYBOY MANSION!**

AH, YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR, ALWAYS SO **HUMAN**, SO **EFFETE**...

DO YOU THINK MY **SUCCESS** HAS MADE ME **WEAK**? DO YOU THINK THAT I HAVE FORGOTTEN HOW TO **FIGHT**?

TRY ME!

GRRR

I HAVE TO ADMIT TO BEING A LITTLE **MIFFED** THAT MY ATTEMPTS TO MEET SAHARA AND HORN HAD BEEN HIJACKED TO STAGE SOME KIND OF RESCUE.

BUT KNOWING THAT WE WERE RESCUING MIKI'S MOTHER MADE IT PERSONAL AND I FOUND MYSELF SWEPT ALONG BY THE SHEER ADRENALIN OF IT ALL.

SAPPHIRE, KEEP THE ENGINE RUNNING...

MIKI, THEO, I MIGHT NEED YOUR ***HELP*** HERE.

JUST DON'T EXPECT ME TO BE ***NICE*** TO ANYONE IN THERE, JACK.

AS FAR AS I COULD TELL, MIKI, THE WHOLE PLACE IS ***AUTOMATED***. NO GUARDS.

AS FAR AS YOU CAN TELL? THAT MEANS YOU DON'T KNOW, DOESN'T IT?

DO I GET A ***GUN?*** I MEAN, I THINK I MIGHT NEED ONE, DON'T YOU?

I HOPED I SOUNDED **TOUGH** BUT, IF HE'D GIVEN ME A GUN, I WOULDN'T HAVE KNOWN WHAT TO DO WITH IT.

JUST STICK CLOSE TO FARRELL, THEO, HE ***KNOWS*** WHAT HE'S DOING.

REALLY? DIDN'T WE JUST HAVE TO RESCUE HIM FROM THE ***ROOF?***

THE TRICK IS ***GETTING*** TO THE ROOF...

THIS PLACE ***IS*** EMPTY BUT LET'S BE CAREFUL...

I WASN'T EXPECTING TO FIND ***OBADIAH HORN*** HERE, AFTER ALL.

THEY SHUT THIS PLACE DOWN ONCE BEFORE, YOU KNOW, THEY'LL JUST FIND ANOTHER LOCATION AND START OVER AGAIN.

+++ THIS ONE ++ HAS NO FEELINGS + ON THE MATTER +

MAYBE NOT, BUT IT'S NEVER WISE TO CROSS HORN INDUSTRIES.

MISTER YOSHITOKU. MIKI'S MOM... WHERE IS SHE?

RIGHT HERE... TWO DOORS DOWN... IT'S AN APARTMENT...

MIKI... ISN'T THAT... YOUR *DAD?*

IT IS.

ARE YOU SAYING HE'S BEEN KEEPING YOUR MOM A... *PRISONER?*

I AM SAYING THAT.

IT'S... *COMPLICATED.*

MIKI...?

MAMA!

MAMA!

MAMA, IT'S TAKEN ME SO LONG TO FIND YOU... I'M SO, SO SORRY.

HOW DID YOU FIND ME... WHAT HAPPENED?

WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE? ARE THEY TAKING YOU CAPTIVE NOW TOO?

NO, MAMA. THESE ARE MY FRIENDS. WE'RE GETTING BOTH OF YOU OUT OF HERE.

HI THERE, I'M THEO--

YEAH, YEAH, NO TIME FOR *TEA AND BISCUITS*, PAL WE CAN EXCHANGE PLEASANTRIES WHEN ITS *SAFE* TO DO SO...

+++ MISTER FARRELL ++ THE FATHER IS + RUNNING + SHOULD THIS ONE MAKE *PURSUIT?* +

NO. WE'RE *DONE* HERE, DILLON, WE'RE GETTING OUT.

MY HUSBAND--?

"COMPLICATED" SEEMED TO BE AN UNDERSTATEMENT. I HAD A LOT OF QUESTIONS BUT IT SEEMED WISE TO SAVE THEM FOR LATER.

YOU--

WHUNCH

CAN NOT--

WHAMM

BEAT ME!

I CANNOT BE STOPPED, FLASK. NOT HERE, NOT EVER.

DON'T... DO IT, HORN...DON'T START ANOTHER WAR...

START A WAR...?

THE WAR NEVER ENDED!

YOU ARE A FOOL TO THINK THERE HAS EVER BEEN PEACE BETWEEN OUR KIND AND MAN!

HEED MY WORDS: I DIDN'T BECOME THE MOST POWERFUL ELEPHANTMEN IN THE WORLD TO SIT ON THE SIDELINES AND CHEER HUMANITY ON...

HIP! OH NO, OH NO... HE LOOKS BAD...

WE'VE BOTH SEEN HIM TAKE *WORSE* BEATINGS, MIKI. MY PARTNER IS FREAKIN' *TOUGH!*

HE'S ALIVE! WE GOTTA GET HIM TO SAINT FRANCIS'S!

SAINT GABRIEL'S IS CLOSER, AND MAYBE *SAFER...*

DILLON, IF YOU DON'T MIND, CAN YOU DO THE HONORS?

+++ THIS ONE ++ UNDERSTANDS + + PLEASE ++ STEP ASIDE +

BEANS AND CHEESE! BE *CAREFUL!*

YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT, BIG GUY, WE'RE GETTING YOU HELP...

TEETH... HURT...

I'M CALLING SHORTY'S PRIVATE SURGEON... HE'S THE BEST...

NOT TO BE A DOWNER, BUT HE REALLY DOESN'T LOOK TOO GOOD, JACK...

TRANSGENICS HEAL *FAST*, THEY'RE KINDA *DESIGNED* THAT WAY.

MIKI, YOU'RE GONNA HAVETA TAKE THE WHEEL, WE GOTTA PICK UP MY *BUG*.

I SPENT A FORTUNE FIXING IT UP AFTER THAT FATASS *PENTALION* FELL ON IT, I CAN'T AFFORD TO *LOSE* IT.*

*See ELEPHANTMEN 2261: THE PENTALION JOB

AS THE DUST SETTLED AND WE SAILED AWAY INTO THE NIGHT, I REFLECTED ON ALL MY INTERACTIONS WITH THE ELEPHANTMEN AND THEIR FRIENDS.

SKYCAB

I CERTAINLY HAD NOT EXPECTED TO GET CAUGHT UP IN THIS BIZARRE MISSION TO RESCUE MIKI'S MOTHER AND CHILD.

SAPPHIRE SEEMED EVEN MORE SURPRISED THAN I WAS, BUT AS SHE LOOKED OVER AT MIKI'S DAUGHTER, I THOUGHT I SAW A GLIMPSE OF ENVY AND EVEN **REGRET**... IT LED ME TO WONDERING IF SHE WISHED SHE HAD HAD A CHILD WITH SHORTY.

OF ALL THE ROBOTS AND SYNTHETICS I'D ENCOUNTERED ON MY TRIP, **DILLON** WAS THE STRANGEST OF ALL, BUT I LATER REALIZED THAT SHE HAD BEEN KEY TO OUR SURVIVAL.

IT WASN'T UNTIL A LOT LATER THAT WE WERE ABLE TO DISCUSS THE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR COVERT ACTIVITIES...

SKYCAB

UM, AM I UNDERSTANDING THIS CORRECTLY?

YOU'RE *NOT* CALLING THE POLICE?

AH, THEO, MAYBE IF WE WERE IN *ENGLAND* THAT WOULD BE EFFECTIVE...

BUT DO YOU NOT KNOW ABOUT THE *MAYOR* OF LOS ANGELES...?

THE ONE WHO SAID HE *HATES* TRANSGENICS? *DOUGLAS SHORE?*

SURELY HE'LL *JUMP* AT THE CHANCE TO *JAIL* HORN AND BURY THE KEY?

MORE LIKELY, HE'LL BURY ANY *EVIDENCE* THEY MIGHT FIND OVER THERE.

DUDE, HORN HAS *ALL* THE CITY OFFICIALS IN HIS POCKET. HOW DO YOU THINK HE SPENDS HIS *MONEY?*

YOU HAD A DAY WITH TRENCH, THEO, HE DOES HIS BEST BUT THE *REAL* CRIMINALS AREN'T OUT ON THE STREETS...

THEY'RE IN WHITE COLLAR JOBS FUNDING COMPANIES LIKE *MAPPO* AND *NEXGEN* -- OR *HORN INDUSTRIES!*

BUT I HAVE *VIDEO EVIDENCE* -- WHEN MY DOCUMENTARY GOES PUBLIC...

THEO, JUST TRY PUBLISHING YOUR MATERIAL AND SEE WHAT KIND OF RED TAPE YOU GET WRAPPED UP IN...

ANYWAY, WE'RE GLAD *YOU'RE* STILL ALIVE, HIP...

I HOPE YOU'LL FORGIVE US FOR KEEPING OUR LITTLE RESCUE MISSION FROM YOU.

HIP, I LOVE YOU, BUT IF I'D GOTTEN YOU INVOLVED EARLIER, WELL, FARRELL CAN OPERATE JUST A LITTLE MORE ***DISCREETLY***, IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.

I KNOW, IT'S ***TOUGH*** BEING THE TALL, DARK ***HANDSOME*** ONE...

I'M JUST GLAD I WAS THERE TO ***SAVE*** FARRELL'S SORRY ASS--

BY PUSHING HORN OFF THE ***ROOF?*** DUDE, PLEASE, ***I*** COULD HAVE DONE THAT.

JACK FARRELL! I'D LIKE TO HAVE SEEN YOU ***TRY!***

IF MIKI HAD HER WAY SHE'D HAVE JUST FLOWN HER CAB *RIGHT INTO HIM*... BUT SHE'S WRITTEN OFF ENOUGH SKYCABS THAT WAY ALREADY.

OH I ***KNOW*** HOW SHE DRIVES.

WHEN SHE BROUGHT ME BACK FROM THE DESERT THAT ONE TIME, WE GOT HOME *BEFORE* SHE PICKED ME UP!

*HIP, I REALIZED, WAS THE **REAL** HERO OF THIS HOUR, **THE COMMON MAN**, IN FACT, UPHOLDING THE **HUMANITY** THAT WAS, I'D SAY, HIS **TRUE** HERITAGE. NO WONDER SO MANY PEOPLE **LIKED** HIM.*

***HORN**, ON THE OTHER HAND, SEEMED TO ESCHEW HIS HUMAN SIDE, ALTHOUGH WHAT IS MORE HUMAN THAN AN **ANGRY**, ANIMALISTIC NATURE? MAN, MORE ANIMAL THAN ANIMAL... OBADIAH HORN SEEMED TO HAVE EVERYTHING... MONEY, POWER, A BEAUTIFUL WIFE...*

HIP DIDN'T HAVE THOSE THINGS, BUT HE WAS HAPPY NEVERTHELESS.

AND IF WE WERE TO BELIEVE FARRELL, HORN WANTED **MORE**... HE WANTED TO RECREATE THE ELEPHANTMEN EXPERIMENT WITH HIMSELF AS THEIR NEW CREATOR, THEIR NEW **GOD**...

LIKE SO MANY SOLDIERS, THE ELEPHANTMEN WERE ULTIMATELEY **DISPENSABLE**, BOOTS ON THE GROUND -- ONLY BY KILLING THE ENEMY COULD THEY GAIN ESTEEM.

IT SEEMED TO ME THAT THE ONLY WAY OBADIAH MIGHT FEEL THAT HE COULD GAIN EVEN GREATER ESTEEM THAN THE FOUNDER OF **MAPPO**, THE CREATOR OF THE ELEPHANTMEN, **KAZUSHI NIKKEN**, WAS TO LEAD AN ARMY OF HIS OWN KIND **AGAINST** HUMANITY.

AND TO WHAT END, I HAD TO WONDER? WOULD **SAHARA** STAND BY HIS SIDE IF HER HUSBAND SOUGHT TO HOLD **DOMINION** OVER ALL MANKIND?

SO IT GOES -- COME TO TERMS WITH THE BEAST WITHIN, AS PERHAPS HIP AND EVEN TRENCH HAD, AND WORK FOR THE GREATER GOOD, OR GIVE IN TO IT AND REPEAT THE CYCLE OF ANGER AND **REVENGE**.

I REALLY DIDN'T KNOW THE ANSWER TO THESE QUESTIONS, BUT HAVING WATCHED THE GRUDGE MATCH BETWEEN HORN AND HIP FLASK, A CREATURE -- A **MAN** -- THAT I HAD ONLY GOT TO KNOW OVER THE COURSE OF THIS LONG, **WEIRD** WEEKEND, I WAS PREPARED TO BELIEVE THAT **ANYTHING** WAS POSSIBLE.

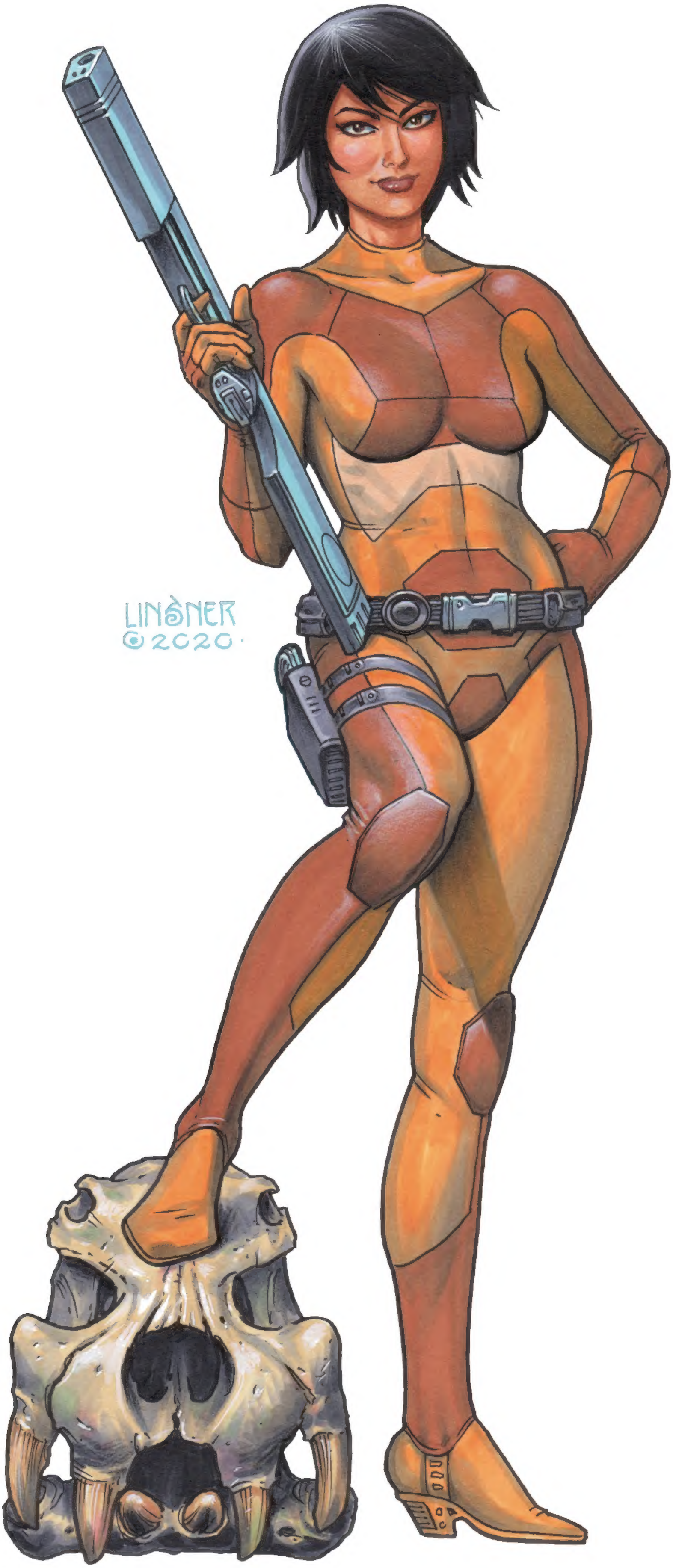
MY LAST THOUGHT AS I TOOK THE TRAIN FROM SAN GABRIEL BACK TO MY HOTEL WAS THIS:

SAPPHIRE HAD SAID THAT THE ELEPHANTMEN WERE EMOTIONALLY **TETHERED** TO SAHARA...

THE STORY OF THE ELEPHANTMEN ISN'T JUST A STORY ABOUT CHILDREN TAKEN FROM THEIR MOTHERS, THIS IS A STORY ABOUT CHILDREN "FATHERED" BY A CALLOUS AND DISTANT MAN WHO HAD NO INTENTION OF PROVIDING THOSE CHILDREN WITH AN ESSENTIAL HUMANISTIC COMPASS.

SO WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF SOMETHING HAPPENED TO SAHARA?

TO BE CONTINUED?


LINSNER
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"I'VE ALWAYS BEEN A BIG FAN OF THE BRITISH DOCUMENTARIAN WHO INTERVIEWED THE TIGER KING LONG BEFORE HE BECAME A LOCKDOWN SENSATION, AND WHOSE MY SCIENTOLOGY MOVIE IS AVAILABLE ON NETFLIX, AND I FOUND MYSELF WATCHING ALL HIS DOCUMENTARIES ON THE IPLAYER AND STARTED WONDERING WHAT HE WOULD MAKE OF THE ELEPHANTMEN."

RICHARD STARKINGS INTERVIEWED BY NEWSARAMA

ENTER: THEO LAROUX!

SO ENTER THEO LAROUX, A NEW CHARACTER WHO COMES TO LOS ANGELES TO TALK WITH SOME OF THE MOST PROMINENT ELEPHANTMEN — TRENCH, HIP FLASK AND OBADIAH HORN — TO DOCUMENT THEIR EFFECT ON HUMAN SOCIETY AS A WHOLE. THEO IS A CURIOUS AND COMPASSIONATE NARRATOR WHO IS ALWAYS LOOKING TO GET TO KNOW HIS SUBJECTS. HE WANTS TO TELL STORIES THROUGH THE CHARACTERS HE MEETS.

NEWSARAMA.COM

"HOW CAN I GET A COPY OF THIS?"

LOUIS THEROUX via twitter

GOODREADS

ART BY JOSEPH MICHAEL LINSNER

THIS ISN'T YOUR AVERAGE FISH-OUT-OF-WATER STORY! STARKINGS BLENDS HORROR, SCI-FI, CRIME DRAMA AND COMEDY INTO A FAST-PACED NARRATIVE THAT IS MADE ALL THE MORE CAPTIVATING BY MEDELLIN'S ART. A REFRESHING CHANGE OF PERSPECTIVE THAT CAN BE ENJOYED AS A STAND-ALONE BOOK OR AS PART OF THE RICH, EXPERTLY CRAFTED WORLD OF THE ELEPHANTMEN.

JAMIE WALTERS

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